

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 OMB-01 EB-11

FAA-00 DOTE-00 SY-03 ACDA-19 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 DRC-01 DPW-01 FRB-02 SWF-02 AGR-20

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P R 270805Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8268

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN

USLO PEKING

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC

CINCUSARPAC

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CDR USSAG NKP

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CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN

USDAO SAIGON
COMUSMACTHAI
DODSPECREP BANKGOK
DODSPECREP NKP
354 TFW KORAT
CHSPECACTS BANGKOK
CDR JCRC NKP
7 ACCS KORAT
432 TFW UDORN
8 TFW UBON
56 SOW NKP
388 TFW KORAT
AMEMBASSY RANGOON

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 VIENTIANE 2469

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PFOR, PINT, ECON, LA
SUBJECT: LAO WEEKLY SITREP - MARCH 27

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD; 13 AF ADVON, 432 TFW, 56 SOW,
388 TFW, 354 TFW AND 8 TFW FOR DO/DI; MACTHAI FOR J-2
AND PAO

REF: VIENTIANE 2285

BEGIN SUMMARY: INCREASINGLY SIGNS NOW POINT TO FORMATION
OF NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT IN LAOS BEFORE LAO NEW YEAR
IN MID-APRIL. LPF PLENIPOTENTIARY PHOUMI VONVICHIT IS
SCHEDULED TO RETURN TO VIENTIANE MARCH 27 AND SOUVANNA
IS PREDICTING THAT HE AND SOUPHANOUVONG WILL CALL ON KING
SOON THEREAFTER FOR INVESTITURE OF NEW GOVERNMENT. DURING
WEEK, PROGRESS ON NEUTRALIZATION OF THE TWIN CAPITALS
MOVED AHEAD APACE AS THE JOINT POLICE FORCE TOOK OVER
RESPONSIBILITY FOR SECURITY AT THE WATTAY INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT AND FOR THE SECURITY/IMMIGRATION FUNCTIONS ALONG
THE MEKONG RIVER IN VIENTIANE. ON MARCH 20 THE
JOINT COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT REQUESTED
REACTIVATION OF THE ICC/LAOS; WHILE THE CANADIAN
DELEGATE PERSISTS IN HIS RECOMMENDATION TO ADJOURN
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ICC/LAOS OPERATIONS, SINE DIE. BOTH REQUESTS WILL BE
DISCUSSED AT SUBSEQUENT ICC MEETING. ON MILITARY FRONT,
INCIDENTS ROSE TO ELEVEN DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD.

END SUMMARY.

I. IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT

1. JOINT COMMISSION DEVELOPMENTS

ON MARCH 22, SOUKAN VILAYSARN, CHIEF OF THE RLG'S JCCIA DELEGATION, DISTRIBUTED A LETTER INFORMING ALL RLG PERSONNEL AND RESIDENTS OF VIENTIANE OF THE CONFIGURATION OF THE 15-KILOMETER BUFFER ZONE AROUND VIENTIANE, APPROVED MARCH 13 BY THE TWO LAO PARTIES. SOUKAN CALLED ON THE PEOPLE TO COOPERATE WITH THE PROTECTIVE MILITARY FORCES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE AN EFFECTIVE NEUTRALIZATION OF VIENTIANE. SINCE MARCH 19, THE JOINT POLICE FORCE (JPF) HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OPERATION OF THE RIVER POLICE. MOREOVER, DURING THE WEEK, RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMMIGRATION POSTS ALONG THE MEKONG RIVER AND ON SEVERAL ROADS INTO AND OUT OF VIENTIANE WAS ALSO HANDED OVER TO THE JPF.

ON MARCH 19, SOUKAN SENT A LETTER TO LPF DELEGATION CHAIRMAN SOTH PHETRASY, APPROVING THE LPF REQUEST TO ESTABLISH A REGULARLY SCHEDULED FLIGHT FROM HANOI TO VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG AND RETURN.

RLG DEFENSE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN GENERAL THONGPHANH ANNOUNCED THAT AUTHORIZATION HAD BEEN ISSUED FOR COMPLEMENTS OF THREE DRV AND ONE LPF "AVIATION TECHNICIANS" TO BE STATIONED AT VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG AIRPORTS, RESPECTIVELY. TECHNICIANS, DUE TO ARRIVE MARCH 27 BY AEROFLOT, ARE PURPORTEDLY NECESSARY FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF REGULAR FLIGHTS BY AN-24B. CONTRADICTING SOUKAN'S LETTER, THONGPHANH SAID ONLY A TRIAL FLIGHT OF THIS AIRCRAFT HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED. THE AN-24B CAN CARRY ABOUT 40 PASSENGERS AND WOULD BE CAPABLE OF UTILIZING THE SHORT SAM NEUA AIRSTRIP. IT MAY BE INTENDED TO REPLACE THE AN-2 BIPLANE

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FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING LPF LEADERS TO VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG.

IN OTHER AIRPORT NEWS, LANE PATTAMAVONG, RLG DELEGATION SPOKESMAN, TOLD REPORTERS MARCH 25 THAT JPF

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P R 270805Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8269

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 VIENTIANE 2469

CONTINGENT AT AIRPORT "WOULD SOON BEGIN CONTROLLING STRICTLY MOVEMENTS OF AIRCRAFT OF FREIGN AVIATION COMPANIES, AS WELL AS LOA AIRCRAFT ARRIVING FROM ABROAD". PURPOSE OF THIS CONTROL WOULD BE TO "PREVENT ILLEGAL ENTRY OF FOREIGNERS AND CUSTOMS FRAUDS." LANE MENTIONED THAT THERE WERE "RUMORS THAT CERTAIN FOREIGN AIRLINES WERE ILLEGALLY DISEMBARKING FOREIGNERS IN LAOS."

2. LPF DEVELOPMENTS

ACCORDING TO LPF CHIEF NEGOTIATOR, PHOUN SIPRASEUTH, LPF PLENIPOTENTIARY PHOUMI VONGVICHIT WILL RETURN TO VIENTIANE MARCH 72 TO RESOLVE VARIOUS PROTOCOL PROBLEMS RELATING TO "FORMATION OF THE PGNU AND ITS PRESENTATION TO THE KING FOR PROMULGATION." PHOUN ADDED THAT PHOUMI WILL HAVE AUTHORITY TO AGREE ON A DATE OF FORMATION. PHOUN EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE SECURITY SITUATION IN VIENTIANE, ALTHOUGH RLG ARMED FORCES AND T-28 AIRCRAFT ARE STILL TO BE REMOVED. PHENG PHONGSAVAN TOLD EMBOFF MARCH 26 THAT NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FORMED NEXT WEEK; "EVERYTHING IS READY," HE SAID.

ON MARCH 22, RADIO PATHET LAO (RPL) BROADCAST A LAO PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (PFRP) LETTER COMMEMORATING THE 19TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARTY'S FOUNDING. THIS CONSTITUTES FIRST TIME THAT RPL HAS OFFICIALLY BROADCAST A LPRP DOCUMENT. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST WAS THE STATEMENT
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THAT THE LPRP WAS FOUNDED TO "CONTINUE THE BRILLIANT TASK OF THE INDOCHINESE (COMMUNIST) PARTY." TIMING OF THIS BROADCAST IS CURIOUS, BUT APPEARS TO FIT WITH RECENT VISITS OF OTHER INDOCHINESE INSURGENT LEADERS TO SAM NEUA AND WITH "PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS" BY PRG REPRESENTATIVES LAST WEEK. FOR EXAMPLE, ACCORDING TO PATHET LAO MEDIA SOURCES, THE LPF AND GRUNK/FUNK AGREED MARCH 19 TO EXCHANGE REPRESENTATIVES. PLNA STATED THAT KHAMPHAY BOUPHA, LPF CENTRAL CIMMITTEE MEMBER, HAS BEEN APPOINTED LPF "REPRESENTATIVE EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENI-POTENTIARY" TO GRUNK/FUNK.

RPL, MARCH 21, ACCUSED THE "ULTRA-RIGHTIST RE-ACTIONARY CLIQUE," BACKED BY THE U.S., OF UTILIZING INTELLIGENCE AGENTS, WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED ABROAD, TO INTIMIDATE LPF CADRE AND SABOTAGE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCORDS. THE BROADCAST CALLED FOR THE ELIMINATION OF SUCH ACTIVITIES.

3. RLG DEVELOPMENTS

LA ARMED FORCES DAY, MARCH 23, WAS CELEBRATED IN LOW KEY, AS THE RLG DISPENSED WITH THE TRADITIONAL MILITARY PARADE DOWN LANE XANG BLVD. INSTEAD, CEREMONIES WERE HELD INSIDE THE WALL SURROUNDING THE FAR GENERAL STAFF HEADQUARTERS AT PHONE KHENE. IN HIS SPEECH, THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THE NEW ROLE OF THE ARMY IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A POST-WAR LAOS.

OF PARTICULAR NOTE WAS THE PRESENCE OF SEVERAL LPF REPRESENTATIVES AT PHONE KHENE. IN FACT, LPF CHIEF NEGOTIATOR PHOUN SIPRASEUTH TOOK JVANTAGE OF A RECEPTION FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY TO DECLARE THAT THE PGNU AND JNPC WILL BE FORMED IN THE "NEAR FUTURE," SINCE HE AND SOUVANNA HAD COME TO AGREEMENT ON THE FORMATION OF THOSE TWO INSTITUTIONS; HOWEVER, HE DECLINED TO PREDICT A PRECISE DATE.

ACCORDING TO XAT LAO, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS ASKED SEVERAL HIGH-RANKING RLG OFFICIALS TO DRAFT SPEECHES TO BE GIVEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE FORMATION OF THE PGNU. IN AN INTERVIEW MARCH 26 WITH AP AND JAPANESE JOURNALISTS, SOUVANNA SPOLE OF MEETING MARCH 27-28 WITH PHOUMI VONGVICHIT TO IRON OUT THE FINAL POINTS BEFORE HE AND PRINCE SOUPHANOU-VONG WILL MEET TOGETHER IN LUANG PRABANG, AND SUBSEQUENTLY WITH THE KING. HE PREDICTED FORMATION OF THE PGNU BY THE SECRET

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MONTH'S END, OR, AT LATEST, BEFORE LAO NEW YEAR APRIL 14. HE REITERATED HIS INTENTION TO RETIRE AFTER GENERAL ELECTIONS ARE HELD.

ON MARCH 20, THE KING INFORMED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT PHOUI SANANIKONE THAT HE DOES NOT INTEND TO CALL A SPECIAL SESSION. PHOUI SO INFORMED THE ASSEMBLY'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON MARCH 22, WHICH ACKNOWLEDGED THE KING'S DECISION WITHOUT COMMENT. KING'S DECISION BACKING SOUVANNA AVERTS CONFRONTATION ON THIS ISSUE AND DEFERS SHOWDOWN ON ROLE OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN APPROVING PGNU.

4. OTHER

THE RECENTLY-RETURNED NORTH VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR, LE VAN HIEN, HAS MOVED QUICKLY INTO THE DIPLOMATIC DINNER PARTY CIRCUIT. HE IS ACCEPTING DINNER INVITATIONS FROM MOST AMBASSADORS IN TOWN.

THE CAMBODIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, IN A PRE-DEPARTURE PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 21, STATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S

INTENTION TO RECOGNIZE THE PGNU. HE NOTED ALSO THE HE
HAD NOT ASKED SOUVANNA TO ACT AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE
TWO KHMER PARTIES, BUT THAT RESOLUTION OF THE LAO SITUATION
COULD SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR THE CAMBODPWNS.

THE BANGKOK NATION, MARCH 26, QUOTES SOUVANNA AS
SAYING THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN LAOS WILL BE FRIENDLY TO
THAILAND; ALSO THAT IT WILL SEEK INCREASED ASSISTANCE FROM

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P R 270805Z MAR 74

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S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 VIENTIANE 2469

THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY THE USSR.

PUBLIC WORKS MINISTER NGON SANANIKONE TOLD PRESS
MARCH 26 THAT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO BANGKOK, RTG
LEADERS HAD TOLD HIM THAT PHOUMI NOSAVAN WOULD SOON BE ORDERED
TO MOVE FROM BANGKOK TO SONGKHLA, AS THE RLG HAD REQUESTED.

II. ICC DEVELOPMENTS

ON MARCH 20, THE JCCIA SENT A LETTER TO THE ICC/
LAOS REQUESTING IT TO "CONTINUE ITS ACTIVITIES IN CLOSE
RELATIONSHIP AND COOPERATION WITH JCCIA IN CONFORMITY WITH
ARTICLE 12 OF THE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT AND ARTICLE 25 OF
THE PROTOCOL AND WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE FUNCTIONS
DEFINED IN THE PROTOCOL TO THE GENEVA AGREEMENTS OF 1962
ON LAOS." ALSO INCLUDED IN THE JCCIA PACKET WERE (A) TWO
SLIGHTLY DIVERGENT FRENCH TRANSLATIONS OF THE AGREEMENT
AND PROTOCOL WITH AN EXPLANATION THAT A COMMON TRANSLATION
WOULD BE FORTHCOMING; (B) A PREPARED STATEMENT BY JCCIA
SPOKESMAN LANE, EXPRESSING HOPE THAT ICC CAN HELP TWO
PARTIES TO CARRY OUT THEIR NATIONAL TASKS WITH THE IM-
PARTIALITY AND DEVOTION TO PEACE INHERENT IN THE GENEVA
ACCORDS; AND (C) A DOCUMENT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE JCCIA
AND THE ICC. THE LAST DOCUMENT, WHICH APPARENTLY CONSTITUTES
JCCIA TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ICC, CLEARLY LIMITS ROLE OF

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ICC TO TASKS REQUESTED UNANIMOUSLY BY TWO LAO PARTIES
IN JCCIA.

ICC CHAIRMAN CALLED FORMAL MEETING MARCH 22 TO
CONSIDER JCCIA REQUEST. FOLLOW-ON MEETING, TO DISCUSS
BOTH JCCIA LETTER PLUS CANADIAN REQUEST FOR ADJOURNMENT
SINE DIE, IS EXPECTED AFTER INDIVIDUAL DELEGATIONS HAVE
RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM THEIR HOME OFFICES. CANDEL
EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT LETTER DID NOT SIGNIFICANTLY
CHANGE SITUATION. GOC OBJECTS TO TOKEN/SYMBOLIC ROLE WHICH
JCCIA EXPECTS ICC TO PLAY AND BELIEVES GOC HAS NO BINDING
LEGAL COMMITMENTS TO CARRY OUT TERMS OF 1973 ACCORDS DUE
TO A LACK OF LINKAGE BETWEEN THEM AND 1962 ACCORDS.

RLG SPOKESMAN COMMENTED MARCH 21 THAT "RLG HAD
NOT RECEIVED ANY OFFICIAL INFORMATION REGARDING POSSIBLE
GOC WITHDRAWAL, BUT, IF IT WERE TO DO SO, THE GOVERNMENT
COULD ONLY REGRET SUCH A DECISION, ESPECIALLY AT A TIME
WHEN THE EXISTENCE OF THE ICC IS MORE THAN EVER NECESSARY
TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENTS."

III. SECURITY SITUATION

THE WEEK ENDING MARCH 26 SAW AN INCREASE IN
MILITARY ACTIVITY, WITH ELEVEN INCIDENTS REPORTED. ONE
MAJOR ABF OCCURRED IN MR-IV, ALL THE REST WERE MINOR. FIVE
OF THE INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE IN MR-I, THIRTEEN KILOMETERS
EAST/NORTHEAST OF LUNAG PRABANG, CAUSING TWO FAR KIA AND
THREE MIA, WITH FIVE ENEMY KIA AND NINE WIA. BOTH SIDES
HAVE BEEN JOCKEYING FOR POSITIONS IN THIS AREA FOR THE
LAST SEVERAL WEEKS, RESULTING IN FREQUENT MINOR CLASHES.

IN THE LS-112 AREA OF MR-II, TWENTY KILOMETERS
NORTHEAST OF SAM THONG, A FRIENDLY POSITION WAS OVERRUN
ON MARCH 17 BUT SUBSEQUENTLY RETAKEN. THE SAME POSITION
WAS AGAIN OVERRUN ON THE 23RD. SIX T-28 SORTIES STRUCK
ENEMY POSITIONS IN THE AREA WITH UNKNOWN RESULTS.

RADIO PATHET LAO'S LATEST TWIST IS TO ACCUSE RLG-
RTG FORCES OF ATTACKING THE PL IN BOTH MR-I AND MR-III,
ALONG THE THAI-LAO BORDER. THESE ACCUSATIONS SHOULD BE
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READ IN JUXTAPOSITION TO A BANGKOK POST ALLEGATION THAT FOUR

TROOPS FROM NVA/PL PATROL WERE KILLED IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND.

SIENG SERI NEWSPAPER, MARCH 26, REPORTED THAT BY JUNE 1 (SIC) THAILAND WILL PULL OUT TEN BATTALIONS OF THAI VOLUNTEERS SERVING IN LAOS. CITING A DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE THAI POLICE, GENERAL VITON, THE ARTICLE STATED THE WITHDRAWALS ARE THE RESULT OF TERMINATION OF U.S. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR SUCH FORCES. VITON PREVIOUSLY SERVED UNDER THE COVER NAME OF GENERAL THEP AS THAI SGU COMMANDER IN LAOS.

IV. ECONOMIC SITUATION

USAID COST-OF-LIVING INDEX INCREASED BY ONE PERCENT DURING PAST WEEK, REFLECTING SMALL INCREASES IN A NUMBER OF COMMODITIES, INCLUDING THAI WHITE RICE. TOTAL FOREIGN EXCHANGE DEMAND DURING THE PAST WEEK REACHED ONE MILLION DOLLARS (1973 WEEKLY AVERAGE: \$882,000), OF WHICH \$349,000 WAS FOR POL PRODUCTS.

LAO MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS SPENT THE WEEKEND IN THAILAND, WHERE HE ATTEMPTED TO NEGOTIATE PROCEDURES FOR AIR FRANCE TO FLY FROM PAR
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Draft Date: 27 MAR 1974
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: WorrelSW
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Film Number: D740065-1170
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Subject: LAO WEEKLY SITREP - MARCH 27 CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD; 13 AF ADVON, 432 TFW, 56 SOW
TAGS: MOPS, PGOV, PFOR, PINT, ECON, LA
To: STATE
Type: TE
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